financial position of sugar factories to enable them to pay the farmers' dues, such as grant of incentives for late crushing, creation of buffer stock, permission for export of sugar, revision in guidelines by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the banks enabling sugar factories to draw more credit from the banks and extra releases of freesale sugar to deserving factories.

Export of wheat—despite its low, production

1538. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the factors responsible for export of wheat in early 1996 in the face of decline in production from 65.3 million tonnes in 1995 to 62.2 million tonnes in 1996;

(b) the action taken against those involved for taking decisions non-judiciously;

(c) the reasons of rise in the prices of rice every months; and

(d) the steps proposed to control price of rice to affordable limit of common man?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Initially, in April, 1996, the likely production of wheat during 1995-96 was projected at 66.21 million tonnes. Subsequently in September, 1996 production estimate of wheat was revised to 62.62 million tonnes representing a fall of about 3.15 million tonnes in the production of wheat during 1995-96 compared to the previous year. On receipt of this information, export ceiling for non-durum wheat was brought down to 10.00 lakh MTs from the initial 25.00 lakh MTs. The main factors that weighed with the Government in permitting export of wheat in early 1996 included the following:—

(i) Production of comfortable wheat production during 1995-96 by Ministry of Agriculture;

(ii) comfortable stock level of 7.58 Million Tonnes of wheat in the Central Pool in April 1996 as against buffer norm of 3.7 Million Tonnes;

(iii) to contain the subsidy burden by reducing the carrying cost of excess stocks held in the Central Pool;

(iv) to release valuable godown space for accommodating incoming freshly procured stocks;

(v) to avoid loss of foodgrains through deterioration in quality caused by prolonged storage.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The index number of wholesale prices of rice in February, 1997 has shown an increase of 15% over the corresponding period last year, mainly due to a psychology of scarcity created by the fall in production in foodgrains during 1995-96.

(d) Government is closely monitoring the price situation. The steps taken to control the rise in prices of rice include the following:—

(i) Increased allocation of rice for supply through Public Distribution System;

(ii) Food Corporation of India is taking steps to issue an additional 5 lakh tonnes of rice under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) over and above the PDS allocation;

(iii) A Restructured PDS for supply of foodgrains at specially subsidised prices to the people living below poverty line is being *implemented*;

(iv) All State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been advised to take strict action against harders and black marketers under the Essential Commodities Act. 1955, Prevention of Black Marketing and

Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, etc.;

(v) Government have decided to import upto 2.00 Million Tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 to augment domestic availability of foodgrains.

Prices of Levy Sugar

1539. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of levy sugar has been hiked from 10th February, 1997 in Delhi;

(b) if so, details thereof with background;

(c) whether such hike has delayed supply of sugar at 800 Fair Price Shops of Delhi;

(d) whether delay in supply of sugar to Fair Price Shops was due to non-despatch of hike orders to State Governments well in advance;

(e) whether Government propose to take some action ensuring that in future such instructions are sent to State Governments in advance; and

(f) if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The retail issue price of levy sugar supplied through Public Distribution System (PDS) has been revised from Rs. 9.05 per kg. to Rs. 10.50 per kg., w.e.f. 10.2.1997. This upward revision had become overdue on account of the fact that the last revision had taken place in February, 1994 and thereafter, the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane had been revised upwards during the 3 successive sugar seasons.

(c) to (f) The information is being collected.

मध्य प्रदेश में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अंतर्गत खाद्यान्न उपलब्ध कराने के लिए बेस डिपो

1540. **श्री राघवजी:** क्या खाद्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अंतर्गत खाद्यान्न उपलब्ध कराने के लिए मध्य प्रदेश में कितने बेस डिपो हैं;

(ख) क्या बेस डिपो की उक्त संख्या प्रदेश की आवश्यकताओं के लिए पर्याप्त हैं;

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो क्या भारतीय खाद्य निगम की मध्य प्रदेश में और बेस डिपो बनाने की योजना है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो ये कहां-कहां स्थापित किए जायेंगे; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

खाद्य मंत्री तथा नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री देवेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव): (क) भारतीय खाद्य निगम ने सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली/सम्पुष्ट सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अधीन खाद्यान्नों की सप्लाई करने के लिए मध्य प्रदेश में 61 नामित निर्गम केन्द्र स्थापित किए हैं जिन्हें "बेस डिपुओं" के नाम से जाना जाता है।

(ख) से (ङ) भारतीय खाद्य निगम के पास 1.1.97 को स्थिति के अनुसार मध्य प्रदेश में कुल 13.59 लाख टन (ढकी और कैप) भंडारण क्षमता है। मध्य प्रदेश में औसत वसूली और खाद्यान्नों के मासिक आवंटन को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस क्षमता को पर्याप्त समझा जाता है।

तथापि, 1997-98 के दौरान भारतीय खाद्य निगम का धनतरी में 10,000 टन की क्षमता के अतिरिक्त गोदाम का निर्माण करने का प्रस्ताव है बशर्ते कि निधियां उपलब्ध हों।

Import of PDS Articles

1541. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the stock of wheat, rice and other food articles in the Central Pool as on 1st January, 1997;

(b) whether Government are importing some food articles for meeting the requirement of public distribution net